

The Secondary Traumatic Stress-Informed Organization Assessment (STSI-OA)

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) affects our personnel, organizational structure, policies and procedures in both subtle and overt ways. Although many organizations working with individuals exposed to trauma acknowledge that STS is present in their workforce, they may need guidance on how to reduce risk and promote staff wellness and resilience. This assessment tool will give organizations an opportunity to engage in self-assessment to determine the impact of STS in their organization and, combined with an overall trauma-informed organizational change framework, support strategic planning in specific areas of need.

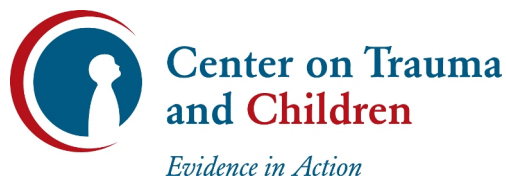
Secondary Traumatic Stress refers to the trauma symptoms caused by indirect exposure to traumatic material, transmitted during the process of helping or wanting to help a traumatized person.

Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt to stress and adversity in a healthy manner.

Organization, as used in this context, refers to the workplace setting that will be the target of this assessment.

Next to each assessment item in these domains are choices based on the degree to which the organization is addressing the specified practice or protocol, including "Not at All," "Rarely", "Somewhat," "Mostly" and "Completely".

After reading each item, place a check mark under the appropriate choice as to how the organization performs on that indicator. These indicators can provide you with a map or framework to guide organizational change.



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1. The organization promotes resilience-building activities that enhance the following:

	Not at all	Rarely	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely	N/A
a. Basic knowledge about STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Monitoring the impact of STS on professional well-being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Maintaining positive focus on the core mission for which the organization exists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. A sense of hope (e.g., a belief in a clients' potential for trauma recovery, healing and growth)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Specific skills that enhance a worker's sense of professional competency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Strong peer support among staff, supervisors and staff and/or outside consultants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Healthy coping strategies to deal with the psychological demands of the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. To what degree does the organization promote a sense of safety?

	Not at all	Rarely	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely	N/A
a. The organization protects the physical safety of staff using strategies or techniques to reduce risk (e.g. panic buttons, security alarms, multiple staff, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Staff in the organization are encouraged to not share graphic details of trauma stories unnecessarily with co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Periodically, the organization conducts a safety survey or forum that assesses worker perceptions of psychological safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Periodically, the organization conducts a safety survey or forum that assesses worker perceptions of physical safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Organizational leaders manage risk appropriately and protect workers as much as possible from dangerous clients and/or situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. The organization provides training on how to manage potentially dangerous situations (e.g., angry clients)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. The organization has a defined protocol for how to respond to staff when critical incidents occur	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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3. How STS-informed are organizational policies?

	Not at all	Rarely	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely	N/A
a. The organization has defined practices addressing the psychological safety of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The organization has defined practices addressing the physical safety of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The organization has defined procedures to promote resilience-building in staff (e.g. self-care workshops)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The organization's strategic plan addresses ways to enhance staff resiliency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The organization's strategic plan addresses ways to enhance staff safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. The organization has a risk management policy in place to provide interventions to those who report high levels of STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How STS-informed are the practices of leaders (executive directors, CEOs, COOs, administration, etc.)?

	Not at all	Rarely	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely	N/A
a. Leadership actively encourages self-care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Leadership models good self-care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Staff provides input to leaders on ways the organization can improve its policies and practices regarding STS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Supervisors promote safety and resilience to STS by routinely-attending to the risks and signs of STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Supervisors address STS by referring those with high levels of disturbance to trained mental health professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Supervisors promote safety and resilience to STS by offering consistent supervision that includes discussion of the effect of the work on the worker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Supervisors promote safety and resilience to STS by offering additional supervision during times of high risk for STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Supervisors promote safety and resilience to STS by intentionally managing caseloads and case assignments with the dose of indirect trauma exposure in mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Leadership responds to STS as an occupational hazard and not a weakness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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5. How STS-informed are other routine organizational practices?

	Not at all	Rarely	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely	N/A
a. The organization provides formal trainings on ways to enhance psychological safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The organization provides formal trainings on ways to enhance physical safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The organization provides formal trainings on enhancing resilience to STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The organization offers activities (besides trainings) that promote resilience to STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The organization discusses STS during new employee orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. The organization has regular opportunities to provide team and peer-support to individuals with high levels of exposure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. The organization provides release time to allow employees to attend trainings focused on resilience building or STS management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. How well does the organization evaluate and monitor STS policies and practices?

	Not at all	Rarely	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely	N/A
a. The organization assesses the level of STS in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The organization routinely monitors workforce trends (e.g. attrition, absenteeism) that may signify a lack of safety or an increase in STS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The organization responds to what it learns through evaluation, monitoring and/or feedback in ways that promote safety and resilience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The organization routinely seeks feedback from the workforce regarding psychosocial trends that may signify an increase in STS (e.g. increased conflict, social isolation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

8. What is your age?

- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75 or older

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9. Within which of the following service systems do you do the majority of your work with traumatized clients?

- ☐ Child welfare
- ☐ Community Mental Health
- ☐ Juvenile Justice
- ☐ Educational or School Setting
- ☐ Healthcare
- ☐ First Responder Groups (e.g. police, fire, paramedics)
- ☐ Tribal settings

Other (please specify)

10. What is your job role?

- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ Intern
- ☐ Front Line Worker
- ☐ Clinician
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Senior Manager
- ☐ C-Level- CEO, Executive Director, COO, etc..
- ☐ Other

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11. Roughly how many full-time employees currently work for your organization?

- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 11-50
- ☐ 51-200
- ☐ 201-500
- ☐ 501-1,000
- ☐ 1,001-5,000
- ☐ 5,001-10,000
- ☐ 10,000+
- ☐ I am currently not employed

12. How many years have you worked as a professional helper

- ☐ 0-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21+ years